

SN. 09/624,619

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REMARKS

Claims 11-15, 19-22, 29, 30, and 33-39 are now pending in this application for which applicants seek reconsideration.

Amendment

Substitute Fig. 1 incorporating the approved correction is enclosed. Claims 16-18, 23, 27, 28, 31, and 32 have been canceled. Claims 11-15, 22, 26, and 33 have been amended to improve their form, in particular, to overcome the (35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph) indefiniteness rejection. Independent claims 11 and 33 also have been amended to include some of the features contained in now canceled claims. Specifically, each of these claims now include moving means/device for moving the sheet processing means/processor and the detecting means/detector in the width direction, which is perpendicular to the side edge of the sheet or the conveying direction. These claims further define that the moving means/device moves the detecting and processing components in predetermined timing and stops the same in response to detection of the side edge of the sheet. Support for the amendment is found at least on pages 24, 26, and 27.

No new matter has been introduced.

Art Rejection

Claims 11-23 and 26-35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Yamauchi (USP 6,014,920). Applicants submit that this rejection has been rendered moot since Yamauchi does not disclose 1) moving means/device that moves the detecting means/detector and the sheet processing means/processor together in the width direction, and 2) controlling means/controller that controls the moving means/device to stop these moving components upon detection of the side edge of the sheet.

As presently claimed, the detecting means/detector (e.g., 93) that detects the side edge of the sheet being conveyed and the sheet processing means/processor (e.g., 90) are moved in a width direction, which is perpendicular to the conveying direction. Moreover, these components (90, 93) are stopped when the detecting component (93) detects the side edge of the sheet.

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Yamauchi does not disclose or teach these aspect of the claimed invention.

Indeed, referring to Fig. 25, Yamauchi discloses a punching unit 162 having a sheet-side-edge sensor 164. The punching unit 162 together with the sensor 164 moves diagonally (along an angle θ) with respect to the conveying direction. Thus, the moving direction is not perpendicular to the conveying direction as called for in independent claims 11 and 33. Moreover, Yamauchi's punching unit 162 does not stop when the sensor 164 detects the side edge of the sheet. Rather, the punching unit 162 is controlled to punch holes when the period T_{Y1} and T_{Y2} elapses after the sensor 164 detects the side edge of the sheet. See columns 33-34.

Because of these differences, Yamauchi would not have anticipated or rendered obvious the claimed invention within the meaning of §§ 102, 103.

Conclusion

Applicants submit that the pending claims patentably distinguish over the applied references and are in condition for allowance. Should the examiner have any issues concerning this reply or any other outstanding issues remaining in this application, applicants urge the examiner to contact the undersigned to expedite prosecution.

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Respectfully submitted,

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